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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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R 291555Z MAR 78
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9839
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NIAMEY 1466

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PERP, NG, RH
SUBJECT: NIGER VIEWS ON RHODESIA

1. IN DISCUSSION WITH DEPTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY JOHNSON MARCH 29, FOREIGN MINISTER DJERMAKOYE DESCRIBED NIGER'S POSITION ON RHODESIA AS SAME AS POSITION OF OAU. DJERMAKOYE SAID THIS AS FOLLOWS. NIGERMNBIDES BY LIBREVILLE SUMMIT DESIGNATION OF PATRIOTIN FRONT AS SOLE REPRESENTATIVE BUT HAS STILL NOT RPT NOT FORMACY CONDEMNED INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. NIGER, DJERMAKOYE SAID, STRONGLY FAVORS PALAVER AMONG ALL RHODESIAN FACTIONS IN ORDER THAT MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE GOVERNMENT EMERGE AND THAT AFRICANS NOT REPEAT "MISTAKE" THEY MADE IN ANGOLA OF PREMATURELY BACKING MINORITY FACTION.

2. PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE TOOK SIMILAR LINE WITH JOHNSON, SECRIBING RHODESIAN PROBLEMS AS FAR FROM INSOLUABLE
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AND EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE THAT IDFFERENT FACTIONS WILL EVENTUALLY BE ABLE TO ARRANGE THEIR DIFFERENCES.

3. COMMENT: RHODESIA IS A LONG WAY FROM NIGER AND BASICALLY LEADERSHIP HERE HOPES PROBLEM WILL SOMEHOW GO AWAY. THIS IS NOT FIRST TIME THAT FOREIGN MINISTER HAS IMPLICITLY RECOGNIZED THAT NIGER--WHICH WAS ONE OF

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SWING VOTES BACKING MPLA AT 1976 ADDIS SUMMIT--MADE A MISTAKE BY LENDING RECOGNITION TO A MINORITY AFRICAN REGIME. NIGER'S MAIN CONCERN NOW IS THAT ANGOLA SICEVARIO NOT BE REPEATED IN RHODESIA BY INFLATING STATUS OF PATRIOTIC FRONT. PRESUMABLY, THEREFORE, NIGER WILL LEND WHATEVER WEIGHT IT CAN TO ANY AFRICAN EFFORT TO BRING RHODESIAN FACTIONS TOGETHER. PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE, AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, IS NOT PRONE TO OPTIMISTIC OR POLLYANNAISH ASSESSMENTS ABOUT AFRICAN PROBLEMS, AND HIS REMARKS EMBL RHODESIAN CRISIS MANAGEABLE INDICATE A STRONG BELIEF THAT SOMEHOW OR OTHER AN ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN FRONT AND OTHER GROUPS IS GOING TO HAPPEN. BUT HE DID NOT SAY HOW.JAMES

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